

Promoting Democratic Values:

The Radio Free Europe/ Radio Liberty Experiment

A Proposal to the Gannett Foundation

December, 1990

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Amount:        \$40,073

### Context

The rapid changes in Eastern Europe, in the Soviet Union, and the end of the US-Soviet nuclear arms race, have created an extraordinary opportunity to study the processes that promoted democratic values in Eastern Europe and the Soviet Union. Several lessons from this case may be especially valuable to promote the evolution of other totalitarian regimes to democratic regimes.

A remarkable feature in this evolution was the early involvement of several social scientists -- experienced with the analysis of propaganda from World War II -- to devise plans for the effective use of new communications technology (especially, the programming of Radio Free Europe and Radio Liberty) to foster political evolution in Communist bloc countries. By the late 1960s and early 1970s Ithiel de Sola Pool at MIT was directing a rigorous and extensive project to use the new capacities of mainframe computers, and data from emigres and other sources, to model short-wave audiences, develop theories of influence and political development, and refine programming.<sup>1</sup> Researchers at Radio Free Europe and Radio Liberty (RFE/RL) studied at MIT, adopted, and expanded these computer models for their own subsequent research.

Thus, there exist in the West an unusually rich body of theory and data -- still unverified directly -- which was used to understand political evolution, shape programming to promote democratic values, evaluate results, and modify program contents by learning.<sup>2</sup> Now, the new

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<sup>1</sup> Ithiel de Sola Pool, "Communication in Totalitarian Societies," in Ithiel de Sola Pool et al. (Eds.), Handbook of Communication (Chicago: Rand McNally, 1973), pp. 462 - 511. An earlier brief summary is idem., "The Changing Soviet Union: The Mass Media as Catalyst," Current (January, 1966), pp. 12 - 17. William Griffith, a senior colleague of Pool's at MIT, served as political adviser to Radio Free Europe beginning in the 1950s.

<sup>2</sup> Among the leading scholarly accounts are Robert T. Holt, Radio Free Europe (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1958); James L. Tyson, U. S. International Broadcasting and National Security (NY: Ramapo Press, 1983); Trevor Barnes, "The Secret Cold War: The CIA and American Foreign Policy in Europe, 1946 - 1956, Part I," Historical Journal, 24 June, 1981), pp. 399 - 415 and idem., "... Part II., Historical Journal, 25 (June, 1981), pp. 649 - 670; Burton Paulu, Radio and Television Broadcasting in Eastern Europe (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1974). Through the late 1960s American funding was covert. Those directly involved have presented memoirs with varying degrees of completeness: see Cord Meyer, Facing Reality: From World Federalism to the CIA (NY: Harper and Row, 1980), esp. chapter 6; the extensive discussion in Sig Mickelson, America's Other Voice: The Story of Radio Free Europe

openness in former Communist bloc countries provides an opportunity to involve scholars in Eastern Europe and the Soviet Union to assess the realism of these theories and the specific causal pathways Western social science theorists imagined would become important. The evaluation of the RFE/RL experiment can provide insight in its own right, and an intellectual structure to study the broader process that strengthened democratic values, reduced international hostility, and ended the Cold War.

### Project

This project to study the evolution of democratic values in Eastern Europe and the Soviet Union, and the role Radio Free Europe, Radio Liberty, and other similar institutions played, has three related parts. At this time funds are requested only for the first, exploratory step:

1.) During the next six months, we will conduct an exploratory study to understand the intellectual background and evolution of the Radio Free Europe/ Radio Liberty experiments and place these experiments within a broader framework of research issues concerning the end of the Cold War.

This exploratory study will include:

a.) interviews in America and Western Europe to survey, and specify rigorously as a basis for cumulative research, the range of theories that informed the evolution of RFE/RL and how these changed across the past 4 decades;<sup>3</sup> we will also be concerned to ask participants to identify key empirical issues which, in their judgment, could be usefully explored to validate their models;

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and Radio Liberty (NY: Praeger, 1983); Harry A. Rositzke, The CIA's Secret Operations (NY: Readers Digest, 1977), pp. 166 - 174.

<sup>3</sup> Interviews will also be conducted with Voice of America and BBC researchers. The native language broadcasts of RFE/RL, and their emphasis upon local news, seem to have given them a wider listening audience. The CIA was involved to distribute, covertly, tens of thousands of short-wave receivers, during the 1950s, as part of the communications strategy, and we will seek to learn more of the details that are relevant to the success of the strategy.

b.) interviews with area- and policy- specialists to inventory the causal issues which must be resolved to explain the successful promotion of democratic values and the end of the Cold War (and, thus, locate the effects and causal pathways of the RFE/RL experiments in wider perspective); we will also be concerned to elicit recommendations for high priority research that can deepen our understanding of the end of the Cold War;

c.) interviews to inventory research resources at RFE/RL, the Voice of America, BBC, MIT (computer simulations) and other archive materials that scholars and graduate students in Eastern Europe and the Soviet Union might wish to draw upon.<sup>4</sup>

This grant (i.e., at the conclusion of stage 1) will provide an extended report, based upon interviews with 25 - 30 practitioners and specialists who have an intimate familiarity with the history and promotion of democratic values in Eastern Europe and the Soviet Union, and the remaining mysteries of this history. The report will survey the history, conceptual issues, and empirical issues raised by the RFE/RL experiment and the unanswered questions concerning the promotion of human rights in Eastern Europe and the Soviet Union and the end of the Cold War.<sup>5</sup> The report will also include a plan for the next 2 stages of the project; the plan will be based upon the interviews and the advice of the practitioners and specialists.

2.) The second stage will build upon findings, and the recommendations of interviewees, in the first stage. We will invite formal working papers from practitioners and leading scholars (including participants from Eastern Europe and the Soviet Union) to address key issues.<sup>6</sup> The

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<sup>4</sup> The RFE/RL Research Institute has recently been established in Munich, and RFE/RL began recruitment for a Director of Analytic Research, Director of Information Resources, and Research Analysts in November, 1990.

<sup>5</sup> The budget includes costs to transcribe and edit the interviews. These contributions to oral history will be deposited with the RFE/RL Archives, and in other suitable locations.

<sup>6</sup> For example, Dr. John Klensin, chief programmer of the MIT simulations; Eugene Parta, Director of Soviet Area Audience and Opinion Research at RFE/RL. Dr. Etheredge will be responsible for writing a paper outlining issues of behavioral science theory; Dr. Willenz will have

working papers will serve as background for workshops that will serve as a catalyst to this field of study.

The outline of issues, people to invite, and the design of these workshops will emerge from discussions in stage 1. In addition to underwriting the costs of the authors of working papers, it may prove useful to underwrite the expenses of other scholars and graduate students from the U.S., Western and Eastern Europe, and the Soviet Union who would find this new line of work of interest.<sup>7</sup> On the Western side, we would also hope for full and active participation by senior research analysts associated with the evaluation projects at MIT, Radio Free Europe, and Radio Liberty.<sup>8</sup> Thus, stage 2 creates a network of personal relationships along with detailed discussion of intellectual, scientific, and historical issues.

3.) Stage 3 -- whose details are less clear today -- involves follow-through to encourage this field of study, with a critical mass of scholars and institutional support to assure high quality research. A modest contribution will be an edited volume containing the working papers (revised,

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principal responsibility for outlining conceptual and empirical issues concerning the end of the Cold War. An overview of issues of causal inference and program evaluation (i.e., viewing the work of RFE/RL as an experiment) is provided by the work of Donald Campbell, e.g., "Reforms as Experiments" and "Qualitative Knowing in Action Research" reprinted in E. Samuel Overman (Ed.), Methodology and Epistemology for Social Science: Selected Papers, Donald T. Campbell (Chicago, IL: University of Chicago Press, 1988), pp. 261 - 289, 360 - 376.

<sup>7</sup> For example: In December, 1989 a Rumanian newspaper wrote, "Radio Free Europe has done more for the cause of Rumanian independence than the entire NATO arsenal," Quoted in Scripps Howard Editorial, "Radio Necessary for New Democracies," Durham Morning Herald, January 1, 1990. Extended and appreciative discussions have also appeared in the Soviet press. The impression of a vital role played by RFE and RL was widely held by experts at an informal panel discussion of the International Society of Political Psychology in Washington, DC in the summer of 1990. The importance of RFE and RL is apparently widely believed in the countries themselves.

<sup>8</sup> It is our impression that the use of social science theory to inform the programming and audience analyses of RFE/RL is not widely appreciated in the Soviet Union and Eastern Europe. Thus, we believe these workshops will offer a novel perspective and will be unusually interesting.

based on discussion at the workshops), edited transcripts of the discussions at the workshops (we hope for extensive, lively discussions), and an annotated bibliography and research guide.<sup>9</sup>

This volume -- which we can, now, reliably foresee although details need to be worked-out -- will be of unusual interest for several reasons.

1.) Western political scientists have lessons to learn about the successful promotion of democratic values. For example:

a.) The basic Neo-Realist prediction international relations theory, based upon the past 500 years' experience, was for a continuation of the Cold War and the enforced hegemony of the Soviet Union in Eastern Europe and Afghanistan. (See Appendix A, "Notes on Learning and World History."). Something extraordinary in world history -- unanticipated by existing theory -- has occurred, and it would be very useful to have a better understanding of how it was brought about.

b.) It appears early American political scientists misunderstood, almost completely, the importance of rock-and-roll (and its associated emotional expressiveness) in communicating an experience of freedom. An original programming idea seemed to be that rock-and-roll would provide entertainment, producing listeners for the programs with political and ideological content. On the contrary, for several generations of youth, rock-and-roll was a direct and

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<sup>9</sup> Structuring the behavioral science research questions associated with attitude change and the successful promotion of human rights will be Dr. Etheredge's principal responsibility. A relevant model is Robert A. LeVine's and Donald T. Campbell's Ethnocentrism: Theories of Conflict, Ethnic Attitudes, and Group Behavior (NY: John Wiley, 1972), perhaps especially relevant because RFE/RL efforts to keep ethnic and national identities alive, as a counter-weight to Soviet influence, reflect an important theory in the minds of some planners. See also Marc Howard Ross's recent work - e.g., "Ethnic Conflict and Dispute Management," unpublished 8/28/90.

compelling political argument, especially when contrasted with boring (repressive) official culture.<sup>10</sup>

2.) The encouragement of democratic values is a long-term venture, and previous experience, thoughtfully evaluated, should be used to increase professional expertise. The RFE/RL case contrasts sharply with other cases in which communications-based strategies were not successful (e.g., efforts beamed at Cuba and mainland China have not yet shown similar success).<sup>11</sup> For the first time it is possible to make a direct, post hoc assessment of a major success, detailing the causal pathways.

3.) The volume will be timely. Now, people can stand subjectively on both sides of a great psychological and political watershed. The data they can provide are still fresh and theories about what worked -- and why -- to promote democratic values and end the Cold War can be assessed with reasonable validity.<sup>12</sup>

In addition to specific lessons, we believe the 3-stage project itself will promote democratic values in several other ways:

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<sup>10</sup> Vaclav Havel gained earlier prominence defending a rock-and-roll group, The Plastic People. The Rolling Stones have been guests of state in Czechoslovakia, a phenomenon which suggests that the questions "What worked, and how?" will produce answers the original theorists did not anticipate. A broad discussion is Timothy W. Ryback, Rock Around the Bloc: A History of Rock Music in Eastern Europe and the Soviet Union, 1954 - 1988 (NY: Oxford University Press, 1990).

<sup>11</sup> Paulu, 1974, op. cit., pp. 148 - 152 discusses several earlier comparisons.

<sup>12</sup> We are not impressed by the claim that time, and historical perspective, inevitably add validity to research. A "balanced" academic judgment one might expect from historians is that "RFE/RL played a role, but so did many other things... one should not exaggerate the importance of any one factor." On the contrary, an informal discussion of the RFE/RL experiment at a recent professional meeting, with participants from Rumania, elicited extraordinary passion, and the assertion that RFE/RL was "absolutely vital," and "a lifeline." The critical path cited was the encouragement and psychological support given the internal opposition -- people felt others, abroad, knew their names and suffering (e.g., in jail) and supported them. If this proves true, the "balanced" historical account may prove misleading, at least about one factor, in one country, and one feature of programming that had a powerful impact. The subjective record of this historical watershed must be recorded, now, to assure future historians can build their analyses upon carefully assembled, timely, records.

1.) It will begin to build a body of literature -- available for curriculum use in Eastern Europe and the Soviet Union -- that views this recent progress as desirable. Thus, it probably will help to consolidate a set of interpretations favorable to these changes.<sup>13</sup>

2.) It will provide a legitimate vehicle to develop wide networks of collaboration between Western and Eastern scholars interested to understand the promotion of democratic values;

3.) It will create a legacy of appreciation for the men and women who devoted their lives, across 4 decades, to the RFE/RL experiment, without prior evidence that their commitment would produce results. (It is probably also worthwhile to honor these efforts to create an anticipation of appreciation for men and women, devoted to the same values in other areas, who have not yet seen the breakthroughs, or received the warm appreciation of previously-dominated peoples that is present in the RFE/RL case.)

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<sup>13</sup> For example, it is probably critical that the regimes were inefficient, boring, and party officials were corrupt and self-serving. (I.e., RFE/RL were effective because they told the truth.) Another example is the possibility that Radio Free Europe became more effective after it reduced the use of critical, exile-written material and, especially after the 1968 invasion of Czechoslovakia, increasingly broadcast the work of indigenous dissenting creative writers at dictation speed, to facilitate copying. The indigenous origin of the dissenting material may have located the programming outside the adversarial framework of the Cold War, facilitated the sense of shared, internal discontent and an internal "psychological underground."

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Budget

I. Salaries & Honoraria

- Released time for P. I. (Dr. Etheredge) for interviewing and archive work in Washington, New York, Cambridge, London, and Munich.	
Counted as 50% time for 5 months @ 100% base rate of \$6,000/month (\$15,000).	15,000
- Research time for co-Investigator, Dr. Willenz, 6 months at nominal honorarium of \$450/month	2,700
- Honoraria for interviews & oral histories w/ 30 people @ \$150	<u>4,500</u>
	22,200

II. Travel

A. Domestic

- Interview trip to Cambridge, MA, NY \$150 + 3 days per diem @ \$150 (= \$450) = \$600.	600
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B. International

- Interview work in West Europe. Airfare @ \$1,200 plus \$150 per diem for 10 days = 1,200 + \$1,500.	<u>2,700</u>
	3,300

III. Secretarial and Office

- Secretarial: General, transcriptions & editorial revisions of 30 2 1/2 hour interviews @ \$100, report typing	3,200
- Telephone, xerox, postage, \$125/month for 6 months	750

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- Misc. supplies @ \$40/month for 6 months	240
- Rental of professional office, Wash., DC 2 months @ \$ 900	1,800
- Misc. costs (lunches, transportation, etc.) 30 interviews @ \$25	<u>750</u>
	6,740

IV. Equipment

- Books and Publications	250
- Portable computer for interview and archive work + software @ 20% of \$2,000	400
- Dictation and transcription equipment for interviews	<u>450</u>
	1,100

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V. Indirect Costs

- Social security (employer contribution of 7.65%)	1,148
- Retirement (10% employer's contribution for Dr. Etheredge)	1,500
- Medical (50% @ \$75/month for Dr. Etheredge)	
6 months FTE	450
	3,090

Sub-Total 36,430

VI. Administrative Fee (10%, Yale Policy Science Center)

3,643

TOTAL 40,073

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Work Plan and Budget Narrative

I. Work Plan

1/15/91 - 2/1/91 Drs. Etheredge and Willenz plan basic Washington, DC oral histories and interviews. Office space is leased for February and March. Dr. Etheredge conducts Washington area archival work at Voice of America and other locations, interviews in Cambridge.

2/1/91 - 4/1/91 Drs. Willenz and Etheredge conduct oral history interviews in Washington, prepare and edit transcripts, identify key areas for European interviews.

4/1/91 - 5/1/91 Dr. Etheredge conducts interviews in Munich and London. Interviews are transcribed and edited.

5/1/91 - 7/15/91 Dr. Etheredge drafts summary report of current knowledge, theories, and research recommendations, revised in collaboration with Dr. Willenz. A proposal for subsequent, hypothesis-testing, steps including conference discussions and an edited volume to alert East European and Soviet scholars to Western conceptions and archival sources, and build East-West contacts, will be prepared as part of the report.

II. Budget Narrative

The budget provides for basic expenses connected with the exploratory study, the first step.

Dr. Etheredge will take responsibility for archival re-

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search, interviews in Cambridge (MA), Munich, and London (with BBC officials and archivists), the conceptual organization of behavioral science issues, the office-management and logistics of the project, and the drafting of the final report and work plans for the next two steps. He will work 50% time for 5 months during the 6 months (calendar time) of the grant.

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Dr. Willenz will specialize in the oral history interviews in the Washington, DC area (in which Dr. Etheredge will also participate.)<sup>14</sup> He will share responsibility with Dr. Etheredge for the summary report and planning for subsequent stages. In these later stages, he will be responsible for identification and development of networks of interested scholars in Eastern Europe, the Soviet Union, and the United States, and the identification of research issues concerning political development and the political transition from totalitarian to democratic regimes. Dr. Willenz is retired and will participate for a nominal honorarium of \$450/month in the first stage.

For this period, from other philanthropic sources, basic work space will be available in Washington, DC from another project, at 1727 Mass. Ave., without charge to this project. For intensive interview work in Washington, we will rent professional office space in a location that provides conference and taping facilities, secretarial and interview-transcription support, and other business services. The budget provides for \$900/month for 2 months (= \$1,800) for this purpose.

For Washington interviews with senior-level participants and specialists we will ask each participant to prepare for the discussion from a questionnaire we will provide several days in advance. We will offer a nominal honorarium of \$150 (for about 2 1/2 hours of discussion). We expect transcriptions of the interviews (including light editing) will cost about \$100 each, and a lunch and other misc. expenses about \$25 per interview. We anticipate about 20 of these lengthier interview/discussions in

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<sup>14</sup> Scholars in the Washington, DC area may be invited to participate in conducting interviews in their areas of expertise.

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the Washington, DC area (about 30, total) each of which will be transcribed, edited, duplicated, and provided, at the conclusion of the research, to suitable locations as part of an oral history of these years.

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Principal Investigators

A. Lloyd Etheredge

Dr. Lloyd Etheredge received professional training in political science and psychology at Yale University. He taught political science and research design at MIT for eight years and was a colleague of Ithiel de Sola Pool, a leading social scientist whose early work to evaluate and improve Radio Free Europe and Radio Liberty is involved in the current proposal; he currently is editor of Dr. Pool's professional papers. He is a specialist in post World War II American foreign policy, political behavior, and learning of political institutions. He has been a Fellow of the Center for Advanced Study in the Behavioral Sciences and served recently for two years as Director of Graduate Studies for International Relations at Yale University.

Dr. Etheredge will bring to the project a basic knowledge of social science theories of attitude change and political communication that informed the RFE/RL experiment, of the computer simulation methods used to analyze the short-wave audiences, and experience with quasi-experimental analysis and other techniques of program and policy evaluation.

B. Erik Willenz

Dr. Erik Willenz, retired, worked for the RAND Corporation and then was Special Assistant to the Director of the Bureau of Intelligence and Research, and Head of the Research Program for European Affairs, at the Department of State from 1956 - 1983. He was Professorial Lecturer at Johns Hopkins School for Advanced International Studies from 1968 - 1985 and Senior Associate at

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the Carnegie Endowment for International Peace, 1985 - 1986. He was intimately familiar with the preparations for the Helsinki accord meetings.

Dr. Willenz brings to the project a wide knowledge of practitioners and diplomatic history on the American side, of political science, and of the evolving social science community in Eastern Europe and the Soviet Union. He will play a senior advisory role during the first, exploratory stage and will take the leading role in Washington-based oral histories and interviews with area-studies experts and former policy-makers.